

A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,
S H U T E,
Lord Bishop of LANDAFF,
FROM A PETITIONER.

Una salutis via est, si separemur a cœtu. Hæc quidem pars major est; et ideo peior. Meliora pluribus placere non solent, et argumentum pessimi turba est. Quæramus quid optimum factu sit, non quid usitatissimum; quid nos in possessione felicitatis æternæ constituat, non quid vulgo, veritatis pessimo judicî, probatum sit. *Seneca de beat.*

If magistracy should vouchsafe to interpose as much in other sciences as in religion, I am afraid we should have as bad logic, as bad mathematicks, and, in every kind, as bad philosophy, as we often have divinity, in countries where precise orthodoxy is settled by law.—If honesty and good sense be insufficient for this work, 'tis in vain for the magistrate to meddle with it; since, if he be ever so virtuous and wise, he may be as soon mistaken as another man.

Letter concerning Enthusiam.

MARLBOROUGH: PRINTED BY E. HAROLD.
F O R
J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, London; and T.
CADELL, in Bristol.
MDCCLXXIV.

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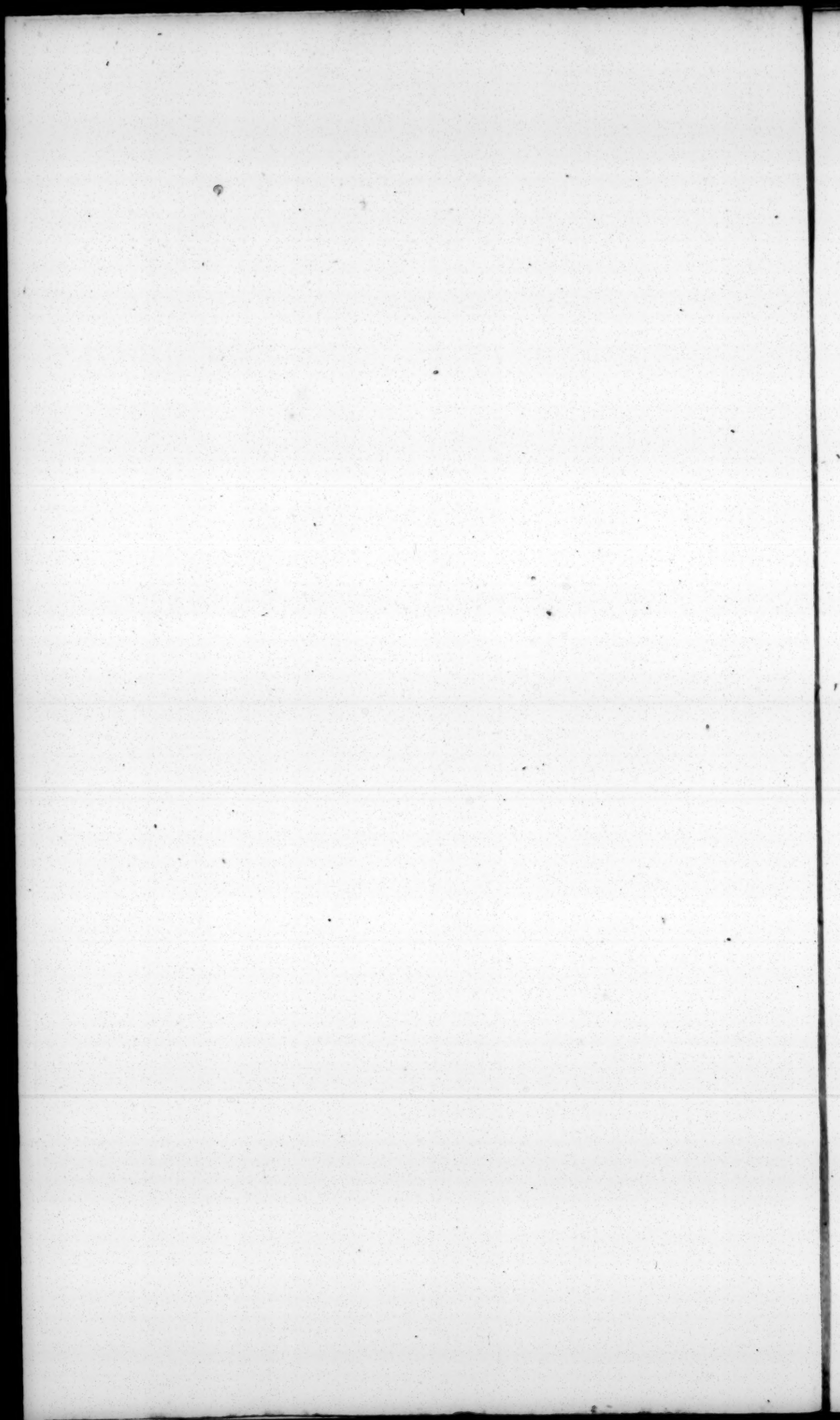
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A

LETTER, &c.

MY GOOD LORD!

WHEN a little man pays his first respects to a great man, he is, generally, in the same predicament with the timid lover, when he first opens his impassioned soul to his haughty mistress: full of anxiety and confusion, his countenance lengthens; his speech falters; his knees tremble; his whole frame becomes relaxed; in short, he cuts but a very ill-favoured and pitiful figure! But if the fair one smiles consent, or the great personage stretches forth the hand of benevolence, the conflict is over: the unhappy wretch is regenerated, he claims kindred with humanity, and assumes a manly and liberal air!

How a beautiful face, or a flaming coronet, should produce such vilifying effects in the human soul

B

divine,

divine, I shall leave to be determined by the sympathetic philosophers; and only appeal to your Lordship as to the fact. For, in your pastoral department, you must have had frequent opportunities of observing human nature debilitated by those invidious distinctions which pride and power have created among mankind. You have seen her disrobed of that sweet simplicity, ease and freedom; the peculiar ornaments of conscious virtue and a sense of independence! you have seen an humble candidate for orders trembling and aghast, with eager hopes, and all the terrors of expectation, look up to your Lordship! In the back ground, and at a fearful distance, stood an honest curate; all alive to the finest sentiments of humanity, and the fondest feelings of a parent; but ‘urmann’d by the hard hand of pinching poverty!’ You saw him, for you must have observed the process of his affections, wish to pour forth his distresses into your bosom:---but something he’d him back; it was a tender diffidence, cruelly chastised by want! Heavens! what would I then have given, had I had any thing to give, could I have seen your Lordship, with the dignity and benevolence of a Christian bishop, step forth to his relief; and with the mild accents of love ask him, ‘what aileth thee, my son?’ Or with the generous freedom of ancient hospitality, seize him by the hand, and bring him forward, with classic purity and warmth,

‘Aude

- Aude hospes contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum
- Finge Deo*!

It was a busy time: you had other important objects to engage your attention: the unhappy man perceived it: felt the distance of situation, and sorrowfully withdrew!

Born and bred in an humble station, and an utter stranger to the *bon ton*, I am half ashamed to own, that I feel, at this time, some traits of the same imperfection: my frame seems a little disordered, while I approach the sacred fur! But as I have nothing to *hope* nor much to *fear* from your Lordship. I shall soon recover myself. and entertain you with that ease, natural to a volatile and independent spirit.---for though I may make you a very humble and awkward bow, people of my temper soon recover the *front erect*.

The world may, perhaps, tell me, that persons of your rank and consequence in life should be treated with *reverence*; but the world and I are frequently of a different opinion; and I chuse to be governed by my own ideas. 'Tis true you are *honourable* by *descent*, and a *Lord* by *profession*, while I must acknowledge,

‘ Non vetera patriæ jura possideo domus,
 —————: nobiles non sunt mihi
 Avi, nec artis inclytum titulis genus §!’

* Virgil.

§ Sen. Hercul. fur.

B 2

But

But whatever difference fortune may have made between your circumstances and mine, I shall consider as the mere effect of accident ; and you must therefore expect no other treatment than what every gentleman is intitled to ; as such I shall endeavour to deal with you ; and as a preliminary, I must insist upon it. you are to expect no more. I purpose, indeed, to deal plainly with you ; and as you are an honest man, you will thank me for my freedom. Your friends have been exceeding lavish of their adulation ; and, 'tis said, your enemies have been as severe ; your character is therefore problematical, and my business is to analyze it. Don't be afraid ; I will do you strict justice :---I know very little of your private character ; you may be a saint for ought I know ; my attention is directed to your public ; you have brought yourself forward on the canvass, and every man has a right to examine and criticise your political figure as he thinks fit.

Many things, it seems, have been written about you ---but I give you the word of an honest man I never read any of them ; so that if you have any thing *new* about you, in all likelihood it may come out.

What first occasioned this address, was a conversation I lately had with, what we call, an honest, moderate churchman. He absolutely condemned
your

your character as a Lord, and added with too much emphasis

“ I pray his mother us'd his father fair,
For such a slip of bigotry ne'er issued from his loins *.”

The quotation hurt me, and I paid the tribute due to so excellent a woman. All the world, said I, knows the bishop's father was a Presbyterian, and every community produces some violent members. You mistake me, replied my friend, the father was a calm goodnatured man, willing to let every individual go to heaven in his own way ; but this same bishop will admit no one to go thither but in the paths of Calvin, or a Cranmer. What could I say? he exulted, and painted your conduct in the *house*, in *such* a manner, that all my philosophy could not preserve my temper. What, said I, is the bishop a tool of M-----y? does he envy the few and poor privileges of a Dissenter? or is he afraid, that the Church will doubt his orthodoxy, and that he is but half a convert? Much might be said on either supposition, resumed my friend, but I shall leave you to draw your own conclusions, while I satisfy myself with despising the man, as I do every mean and illiberal bigot of every persuasion.

I had never seen my friend in *such a taking*, as we say in the country, before ; and from that moment

* Shakespeare.

resolved,

resolved, within myself, to criticise the matter, with all that cool and dispassionate philosophy for which I have been always so remarkable.

In consequence of this resolve, I examined the public prints; consulted my political acquaintance; in short, I did every thing in my power to obtain an honest and authenticated detail of your conduct in the upper house. At length I found, that I myself was deeply concerned; that my *temporalities* and *spiritualities* were all at stake, and were even a part of the subject matter in dispute. That a set of harmless inoffensive Christians had brought a humble and modest petition to the house of representatives, signed by near eight hundred of their ministers, praying leave to worship God without terror; and that they might be permitted to lead the life of *honest men*;-- that this petition passed the house with dignity; that it was then carried to receive the sanction of the patricians: in vain did the wisest, virtuest, and greatest men in the land, plead the unalienable rights of conscience. What! shall the Dissenters, cried a small shrill voice from the bench, be indulged with an exclusive right of judging for themselves in matters of religion, while we are shackled down with creeds and articles of faith? No, let it not be told in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askalon! But, my Lord, they desire none of your emoluments, and have separated from your Church:

Church :---it does not signify two-pence ; we are prepared to refuse them every favour. Up rose the venerable Bishop of *London and the Plantations* :---
 ‘ The Dissenters are exceedingly well pleased with their present toleration ; I have authentic documents to prove my assertion.’ Who would have thought, before, that a holy Bishop could tell---the thing that was not !

Your Lordship, I understand, built your system of intolerance upon a very different foundation. You, it seems, insisted, that the Dissenters had no right to be exempted from subscription, ‘ because they did not believe the articles ;’ a notable reason, I must acknowledge : then followed quotation upon the heels of quotation, ‘ till Chatham himself cried Oh ! Some will have it, that he was *astonished at your powers*, like the rest of your friends ; while others declare he was *tired*, and only let slip a senatorial gape ! Be that as it may, I will not contend with you ;---and, for the sake of gaining a little of your attention, will allow that the Dissenters are a little philosophically inclined ; that they cannot madden with the enthusiast, nor meanly subscribe old wives fables with the superstitious : that they consider the gospel as their only rule of faith and conduct, and deduce their religious science from thence ; and that they regard other formularies as the mere offspring of folly, ignorance, or impious policy : and yet, after
 all,

all. I can't see what mighty disadvantage to society would arise, from a free toleration granted in favour of such principles!

'Tis well observed by Lord Shaftsbury, ' that not
 • only the visionaries, and enthusiasts of all kinds
 • were tolerated by the ancients; but, on the other
 • hand, philosophy had as free a course, and was
 • permitted as a balance against superstition:---and
 • thus matters were happily balanced, reason had
 • fair play, learning and science flourished; and,
 give me leave to add, mankind grew happy. Now,
 suppose your Lordship was to take the hint; which,
 by the bye, I quoted out of pure goodnature, as it
 is not to be supposed so orthodox a prelate ever
 read the writings of a man arraigned for theism. As
 a well wisher to humanity suppose you were to take
 the hint, and while the privileged enthusiast pours
 forth the streams of folly, a few individuals might
 be allowed to divert the torrent, by rational per-
 suasion, and the mild, sober philosophy of the gospel.
 Improve the hint; you have abundant room to pur-
 sue it in your own province. G--m-----nshire. for
 instance, is overwhelmed with fanatics of every kind;
 your Lordship's vineyard is full of these plants; for
 they stand in no great need of the hand of cultiva-
 tion;---they thrive mainly in every soil, and have,
 of late, grown so luxuriant in your's, that the fair
 plants of rational religion and modest virtue can
 scarcely

scarcely lift up their heads. Here and there you may perceive a few, languishing indeed, like mild exotics, under the deleterious shade !

Why the first should flourish so vigorous is yet to be determined. It has been said, that your diocese is like the garden of the sluggard, where the hand of cultivation is unknown ; the consequence is upon holy record : ‘ It is all grown over with thorns, and ‘ nettles have covered the face thereof, and the ‘ stone wall thereof is broken down *.’ Some will have it, that these thriving plants are a species of the heliotrope, and in all your ascensions and declinations they turn and look up to you. The world will say strange things, my Lord ; they have said that you are so busied in the *house*, that you have no leisure to go to church, and that your time is so taken up in making of speeches, that no subtraction is left for composing a sermon, or even for writing a simple pastoral letter. Others again, for there are various opinions concerning you, have asserted, that you are so fearfully apprehensive of being thought a Presbyterian, and so determined to refute the charge, that your every moment, your every power, and your every passion is consecrated to the good work of convincing this same world, that you are a legitimate son of the Church, and not a *new Christian* ‡. But the world is perverse ; it will

* Proverbs xxiv. 31.

‡ Vid. King of Portugal’s last Manifesto.

‘ look to the rock from whence you are hewn,’ and judge of your conformity and present zeal by its own standard; and some one perhaps, more ill-natured than the rest, may cry out, ‘ Thou wert
 ‘ planted a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how
 ‘ then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a
 ‘ strange vine § ?

But your Lordship will find me a different man. I admit your pretensions; I will do more; I will even suppose that you are sincere, and mean well to religion and human nature; ‘ Hear counsel then,
 ‘ and receive instruction, that you may be wise in
 ‘ your latter end.†.

Shaftesbury’s observation is founded on historical facts, and contains an admirable lesson for the direction of your conduct, both as a statesman and priest. Adopt the sentiment; let rational religion have fair play; let it be permitted to stand as a balance against enthusiasm, superstition and folly; and depend upon it, you’ll find your advantage. Your pulpits will not be so often disgraced and polluted by the foul hands of broad staring folly, nor your flock be summoned to their consecrated fold, by the *bell of the common cryer*! You may well be surprized;---but ‘tis a fact, my Lord,; I myself have been witness

§ Jer. ii. 21.

† Proverbs.

of the prostitution: I thought of Solomon's folly that stood on the high places bawling out, ' Who so is ' simple, let him turn in hither,' and he that lacketh understanding let him not tarry away. The bell-man, to the music of his instrument, was commissioned to inform the whole neighbourhood, that a *gospel preacher* was to exhibit that evening in church. O yes! O yes! &c. He had better, whispered the spirit of honest Yorick;---he had better have done it to the sound of a trumpet; why so? it would have pleased the pastoral family, and at the same time put the flock in mind of the day of judgment; it would have sunk deeper into the ears of hypocrisy, than perhaps all the tropes and figures the *gospel preacher* can pour in there.---'Tis an ill wind, however, that blows nobody good; the vociferous forerunner will gain something by the job.

Whether I am to consider this *gospel preacher* as an enemy who came to sow tares in your field, while you were absent or asleep, or that he was commissioned by your Lordship to diversify the scene; ---this I know, that neither you nor your servants have hitherto attempted to lessen the crop, which I can assure you is very abundant. Saints are quick growers; they shoot up like mushrooms in a night; folded at first, as if ashamed of their appearance; but the fire of patronage and enthusiasm soon develops them; they spread abroad and poison the

land ! at first sight, fair and pleasing as the daughters of Zion---but examine them, my Lord, lift up the veil, and you'll find all beneath black and rotten ! * shall these grow, unmolested, in the richest of your pastures ? and shall the peaceable, the modest, and rational Dissenter be crushed down to earth † ?

We look up to the Church as to a support ; we would clime around it as a tender vine, expecting no other advantage, and ever willing, gratefully, to yield of our clusters for her refreshment. Would it be generous, would it be prudent to pull us up and cast us into the fire ? The amiable Bishop Ellis was

† I must beg leave here, once for all, to declare, that I have not a particle of the bigot in my constitution. I never did, and, I hope, never shall, fall out with any man for any difference in opinion ; for I do not believe that religion depends so much on opinion as the world is apt to imagine.—I have no objection to tolerate even a Papist, could he give the public sufficient security for his good behaviour : and as to the Christians called Methodists, though I am far from thinking them right in many particulars, yet I know many excellent men among them, who would really do honour to any profession. The general run are a weak and fanatic people, but what is that to me ?

‘ Non est meum, —————

————— ad *miseras preces*

Decurrere.’

If they are edified, it is enough ;—if their devotion is kindled, even by a Will-o'-the-wisp, I don't see why they should be disturbed. Give them time, and the violence of passion will subside into knowledge, moderation, and virtue. I plead for religious liberty in general, without regard to names.

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of a very different opinion. ‘ You have given me more satisfaction, said the venerable old man to one who had just passed his examination, than all the rest of the candidates ; at what College was you educated ? ’ The young gentleman modestly acknowledged he had never seen one ; that he was brought up at a Dissenting Academy in the neighbourhood. ‘ Was you required to subscribe any articles on admission ? ’ ‘ No, an absolute freedom of thinking is allowed to every student. ’ ‘ Was you required to go to Meeting ? ’ ‘ When there were only prayers at Church I went, and was edified, it was my own choice ; I had liberty to go and worship where I pleased. ’ ‘ I approve of your conduct ; continue to respect the rational Dissenters ; live with them on terms of friendship ; they deserve it ; they are some of the best friends of government, and whatever some may think, are no small friends and benefactors to the establishment. ’

What does your Lordship think ? was Ellis the worse man, the worse Christian, or less affected to the Church, by such a concession in favour of an oppressed people, whom you, with a very ill grace, have treated in a different, and, I must say, illiberal manner ?

What could provoke you to such a conduct ? Did you think religion in danger from such men

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as Foster, Leland, Lardner, Taylor, and Chandler, who are gone before to receive the reward of righteousness? or from those who now await the day of the Lord, such as a Price, Priestley, Farmer, and a fair catalogue of others, whose names are dear to Christianity? Men, my Lord,

- * Who bestride the broad world of science like Colossi,
- * While you and I, like tiny dwarfs, peep under their huge legs,
- * Look up, and view their more than human stride*.

But while you thundered in the senate, to the *astonishment of your friends*, you might, perhaps, be animated by a spirit very different from that of religion; for 'tis seldom the case, I believe, that men are very violent about the opinions of others, without having some view, whose lines terminate in *self*. Have you never heard your great friends curse and blaspheme heaven without any apparent concern, or riot in 'ill-managed merriment,' I will not say with the glow of reciprocal festivity, but with the languid smile of consenting indifference †?

* Shakespeare.

† I know several, who, notwithstanding their avowed disbelief and contempt of religion in general, are in high esteem with the *high* clergy, because, though they deny our Saviour, they reverence his successors; and are zealous for the hierarchy, though they laugh at Christianity. The truth is, if a man is a hearty churchman, it is never asked whether he be a Christian; while a conscientious believer is treated as a schismatic, heretic, and the Lord knows what!

VARIOR.

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The *morality* of religion, it seems, is of no consequence, if in articles of faith we confide in our superiors, adopt their systems, and willingly subscribe to opinions as by law established; we are then in a state of grace, and may be favoured with a viaticum whenever we should have a call that way. While matters continued on this footing your Lordship was easy; you enjoyed your *prætexta* in comfort; but the moment the doubts of a few conscientious people ripened into a Petition, the whole man fell abroad! you became violent and impetuous; you poured the full tide of eloquence along, and like the Dragon of Saint John, * cast out of your mouth water as a flood after the * woman, that you might cause her to be carried * away of the flood.' Now, unless your Lordship claims an exclusive privilege of interpreting prophecies, I would suppose that by the woman is meant the Dissenters at large, (by the same figure as when you say *alma mater* and *mother church*) and by the great dragon, the whole * bench, or *pars pro toto* your single Lordship; and by the overwhelming flood, nothing more nor less than your

* With an exception in favour of Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln, who has sufficiently proved that he has a soul untinctured with prejudice, and that he wishes mankind as virtuous and free as God and their Saviour intended. He is intitled to the thanks of every friend to liberty and human nature: mine he has, with a sincerity superior to all the studied forms of expression.

astorishing

astounding speech on a certain occasion. ‘ But the
‘ earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth,
‘ and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast
‘ out of his mouth.’ By the earth is evidently
meant the good temper of the times, which absorbed
the torrent, and saved the devoted maid. And now
I am upon the subject, I must beg leave to explain
to your Lordship another prophecy, which seems
to me to be almost fulfilled:---‘ And he, the beast
or dragon, there is no great difference, causeth all,
both small and great, rich and poor, bond and free,
(for there is no respect of persons) to receive a mark
in their hand or in their foreheads, and that no man
might buy nor sell, save he that had the mark,’ &c.
Rev. chap. xiii. 16, 17. Now, it is very well
known, that in England none but privileged per-
sons, or such as have received the mark, have any
right either to buy, sell, or enjoy places of either
profit or trust under government; all others are
mere helots, or beasts of burden; but, I must own,
there is a way open for manumission; ’tis only to put
your seal to what you don’t believe, and thence to
receive the mark of dishonesty in your hand, and
baseness in your forehead, and the business is done.
And since matters are thus circumstanced, I can
see no better measure the defenceless injured wo-
man can take, than to fulfil the prophecy at once,
and ‘ flee to the wilderness,’ till your mighty wrath
is subsided.

I have

I have now done with prophecies ; whether my interpretation be just or not I shall leave to the decision of your Lordship, as a father of the Church, more especially, as I hear you are to undergo a translation to Bath and Wells, and who can tell but you may succeed the late Bishop as Decypherer to the King ?---in that case you'll have room to exert all your powers as an interpreter of the dreams and dark scriptures of princes and politicians. How far the office may assist you in the investigation of christian truth, or in tracing the fair lines of gospel benevolence, time alone must determine ; but I intend to keep a steady eye upon your conduct, and, as occasion requires, give a faithful report to the world. From what I have hitherto observed, I conclude your Lordship to be of a soaring genius ; and that now you are got upon the first step you are determined to speechify and *astonish your friends*, till you have climbed the stairs of preferment, and are safely landed at *Lambeth* : I should be sorry to see you there, however, for the present incumbent, by what I have heard, is a peaceable, worthy, and benevolent Christian, and fills his exalted station with dignity and ease. Perhaps your Lordship has no such expectation, and that you are driven on by the hopes of popularity, or the love of fame ;---if so, there is some prospect of your recovery. I can help you to an observation in point, by a great mas-

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ter,

ter. and, as far as I can recollect, a particular friend of Asclepiades

‘ *Laudis amore tumes? sunt certa piacula,
Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, et magnam morbi deponere partem.*’—*Horat.*

But if bigotry, or a view of interest, is your incentive. I must give you over; there is no cure for the disease; in short, I must pronounce it a lost case. The *irritamenta malorum* are interwoven with the constitution, and form a part of the man; they turn the very thoughts of the patient awry. “ He finds great modifications in his case; many ways of evasion; many remedies; many alleviations;---a good gift rightly applied; a right method of suing out a *pardon*; good almshouses, and charitable foundations erected for *right* worshippers; and a good zeal shewn for the *right* belief, may easily atone for a few transgressions against the common rights of humanity; especially if they are such as raise a man to a more considerable power, as they say, of doing good and serving the true cause.”† How fallacious and miserable soever the patient’s morality may appear to a wise and good man, it has, nevertheless, been reduced to a system, and served the purpose of the politician, the libertine, and enthusiast in every age!

† Shaftesbury.

I am serious, my Lord, and wish to know upon what principles you went, when you shew'd so much aversion to the reasonable and modest claim of the Dissenters;---or what advantage you could propose to society, to religion, or even to the Church, when you spoke against them in the bitterness of your heart? The notion of the Church's danger is now exploded---its doctrines are guarded by its own canons, and its temporalities by the artillery of the state, and can by no means suffer from any concessions you may think proper to make to sentiment.

- All that the Dissenters ask, is a permission to be *honest*, and to worship God with that unbiassed and fearless integrity, which constitutes the reality of religion. We separate ourselves from the establishment, and have a partial toleration for such dissent;---we ask no favour; we desire no emolument;---are willing to pay tithes of mint, anise and cummin, if you, in your turn, permit us to observe the weightier matters of the law. • Fie upon such restrictions! Unworthy the British legislature! unworthy a people who boast the freest and most manly constitution under Heaven; but where a great number of its constituents cannot keep up the very face of religion but at the expence of their morality!

- Born a subject of Britain; obedient to her laws; just in my dealings; tender and humane in my disposition; useful in my situation; and invariably at-

tached to truth :---yet subject to ruin by the hands of every pitiful informer ! safe only by a wretched connivance, or the more generous spirit of my neighbours. Heaven grant me patience ! who but must feel the indignity ? what honest spirit but must revolt at the thought ? liberty by connivance ! liberty with a naked sword suspended over my head !---the liberty of a smuggler !

Unfortunately, for human nature, 'tis a grievance of long standing, and Britons may exult, if they please, that they are not the only people who have thus loaded virtue with the rewards of unrighteousness :---the old tragedian confesses it was so in his time ; and I am afraid the wise and good shall have always too much reason to cry out with him,

‘ Tristis virtus perversa tulit
Præmia recti.’ — *Senec. in Hyppol.*

Liberty is a word in every Englishman's mouth ; it is thundered out in the senate ; echoed from the pulpit, and hiccup'd in every alehouse :---but the word has no meaning, or the people have no understanding. Behold that stately being, with a wallet on his back---before, he has liberty, property, and roast beef ; let us examine the contents behind : heavens preserve us ! what an unequal balance ! *excise* with all its horrid train of vexations, and a dead weight of creeds, articles of faith, and a long
et cætera,

et cætera, that in the end must crush him down to earth! A blessed cargo, for a philosopher, exclaimed a Frenchman, and much good may it do him!

'Tis a fact, that our pretension to liberty is become the joke of every sensible foreigner, and in company with such, I never presume to mention the word; for two reasons:---I don't chuse, inhospitably, to insult over the misery of another, nor to expose the nakedness of our land by a discussion.

For, after making a proper sacrifice to the general welfare, he alone is to be esteemed *free*, who, in the regulation of life, and the choice of sentiments, has no hindrance, no bias, no controul, but what bear the sanction of truth and reason. But while I disclaim all connexions with a Church, and give up all its emolument to more complying consciences, and yet am bound to worship upon the principles of that church---where is my liberty? what advantage do I reap in the harvest of truth, by such a sacrifice? 'In this world ye shall have tribulation,' says the blessed author of our holy religion,---'tis a hard saying, but I will endeavour to bear it with the dignity and resolution of a Christian---

' mea
Virtute me involvo; probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quero.'-----*Horat.*

Once

Once more, my Lord, I should be glad to know upon what principles of *policy* you could proceed ;--- putting the views of interest, the hopes of popularity, or the preservation of orthodox belief out of the question ? The first, you might extend by various other ways, well known to a courtier ; the second by becoming a patriot ; as to the last there is no danger, and you might have given yourself no manner of trouble--a spirit of reformation is not the character of the age---and, as Sir Robert told Dr. Avery, ‘ this is not a proper time. ’---‘ when will it be a proper time then ? ’ ‘ never. ’ replied the laconic scribe, and there was an end of the bustle.

“ An honest and sensible politician has ever the welfare of mankind at heart, and the only method by which he can, reasonably, hope to promote their happiness, must be, by enlarging their understanding, and strengthening their morals ; every other scheme, however plausible, must terminate in the ruin and misery of a people ; or produce an absolute despotism, which is all the same.

Supposing, my Lord, that you are the rational and benevolent politician described above :--can you imagine that individuals would be the wiser or better men, or warmer friends to the constitution, if they all subscribed the articles of the Church ? you can by no means think so : for you are not to learn at
this

this time of day, that the morality of mankind has very little connexion with opinion ; I mean speculative opinions and metaphysical distinctions. The philosopher would, perhaps, tell you, he does not chuse to do so and so ; because the action is wrong, irregular, or unjust ; the timid Christian, because he associates hell-fire with the deed ;---but give me the honest man, who is a Christian upon better principles, and who will tell you plainly that he cannot find in his heart to do it. The first proceeds coldly by system ; the second by a regimen, proper in every respect ; but which claims his attention, only, as it comes armed with the terrors of the Almighty. But my Christian, unsophisticated by opinion, acts directly from his feelings.---All this while, the doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, imputed sin and imputed righteousness, never entered the head of either, and therefore could have no influence upon their conduct : the reason is evident ; they have no relation to the determinations of life. Sentiments productive of virtue, I revere as the oracles of God ---the rest I would commit, like the leaves of the sybil, to the four winds of heaven.

Some have asserted that the different conduct of individuals depends upon the different modification of their constituent parts---much, perhaps, might be said upon the subject---but I insist upon it, that I have a soul, and therefore, in my moral conduct,
I must

I must act from some internal regards.---I believe there is a God, and that this God has given me a rule of life in the gospel, which, if observed, leads to happiness and immortality : my feelings bear testimony to all this, and I rejoice at the happy prospect. My conduct is influenced by such a belief. Such a faith as *this* I call a principle of action ; all beside, genders strife, contention, and nothing else.

The history of the *five points* is nothing but a detail of misery, violence, desolation and bloodshed ! Would you act over again these scenes of horror in Britain ? In the warm colourings of the historian, we have every day before us the pictures of orthodox zeal, in the *lower Empire* : would you chuse to copy such originals ? ‘ We have quitted, says an ingenious writer*, the fastidiousness and barbarism of our gothic ancestors, and begin to copy the antique with some success :’ but for God’s sake, if we must continue to be servile imitators ; let us copy, the mild tolerancy of the elegant Greeks, and not the sanguinary decrees of councils and fathers, who, lost to every principle of urbanity, reduced the man to a monk, and the benevolent and rational Christian, to a wild and beggarly enthusiast.

But you will say, who proposes, who wishes to persecute ? are you not at liberty to think for your-

* Essays on Public Worship, &c.

selves, and to avow your sentiments from the pulpit and the press; and if an information should be lodged, is it not immediately quashed by a *noli prosequi*? Miserable dependence! salvation from the favour of a court, that has not justice enough to abolish a law, which its own conduct declares illegal, injurious and unjust! 'Tis held, you say, in *terrorem*; but we need not fear. So was the godly act against witchcraft: and yet how many poor creatures, who had no other crimes to answer for to society, than poverty and rags, found it attended with a serious and terrible execution*.

A wise man will never be tempted to trust much to the good temper of the times. 'The fashion of this world passeth away;' and he knows, by the

* Bishops have always been great advocates for laws *in terrorem*.—When the famous Dr. Leighton was condemned in the *Star-Chamber* to be publicly whipped—to have his nose slit—his ears cut off—his face branded with hot irons, and to be imprisoned for life;—this terrible sentence filled every thinking man with apprehensions for himself:—they were told '*Twas but in terrorem, and they were not to suppose that the sentence should ever be executed*:—but Archbishop Laud took care to have it rigorously fulfilled. In the year 1677, when the nation, from the expectation of a popish successor, feared, lest the law for *burning hereticks* would be soon put in execution against Protestants, a repeal of that law was with some difficulty obtained.—It met with opposition from the bishops in particular, who begged it might continue in *terrorem* to fanatics, tho' God forbid, said they, it should ever be put in execution.

E

experience

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experience

experience of past ages, that there is as much dependence upon the refined and philosophic courtier, as upon a savage and drunken mob. The æra of ST. JOHN and SACHEVEREL is fresh in every mind, and ought to be perpetuated by a public monument of execration.

Our Sovereign is said to be mild, benevolent and humane ; and wishes his subjects very easy and very happy : but that he chuses to hold the lash over our shoulders, lest we should grow unruly ; tho' he has no intention of bringing the lash and the shoulders into contact : but I question much, whether this policy be founded upon just principles, or deduced from any knowledge of human nature. Our monthly exhibitions at Tyburn, seem to declare against it. 'Tis only a vulgar rogue that shrinks at the prospect of a gibbet ; while the *heroes* of the road look up with indifference, and from the foot of the gallows plunge with double violence on the unwary traveller. The liberal spirit, the upright honest man, needs no such *rectifying objects* : he pursues the paths of honor and religion with *perfect love*, undebased by fear ; and views the trophies at Hounslow with a sigh for human wretchedness.

Put you and I, my Lord, are debating a quite different matter: my business is not to enquire whether our public executions should be so frequent, or our
roads

roads so disgraced by the mangled carcases of our fellow creatures; but whether any object of terror should be hung up as a restraint on virtue; or to frighten us from our allegiance to truth and a good conscience;---whether, like Mahommed, you would hold the Articles in one hand, and the *scalping* knife in the other?

Give me leave to assure you that you have all this while proceeded upon false data:---I will endeavour to set you right; for my business is to teach.---Pension a BLOOD, and you will make him honest, as far as concerns society; for he will have no occasion to rob: consecrate an *unprincipled* Dissenter a bishop; he will become violent for the articles, and as strenuous as your heart can wish for the hopeful project of uniformity: unsheath the sword of persecution, the timid, but otherwise, honest Dissenter, will sneak within the *pale*. But you will find thousands, rather than make a shipwreck of the faith will fly, indignant, from their native soil, to bend at the shrines of truth, in the uncultivated wastes of America. By this method, you may clear Britain of Dissenters, and render it, in the end, a land of priests and peers!

I have a better opinion of your Lordship, than to suppose you will proceed to such extremes; and, by much, a better opinion of our gracious Sovereign, than to imagine he will back the impetuous zeal of

a young man, to the destruction of some of the most orderly and loyal of his subjects. He may think, with you, that it is proper to keep the *penal laws* in being, while his benevolent heart restrains their effects. Such was Constantine the Great, according to his very orthodox historian M. Le Beau, who observes that ‘the love of good order led him to menaces of the utmost rigour, but the natural tenderness of his disposition restrained their execution; so that the penalties adjudged by the law, became at length mere declarations *in terrorem*.’ But, continues the same historian, ‘he had better fulfilled the duty of a legislator, and of a sovereign, had he been more mild in his edicts, and more firm in his execution.’

All the world knows what use his successors made of these acts, or edicts: and who knows what use succeeding monarchs may make of the act of uniformity? Constantine himself, towards the close of his life, is said to have become more peevish and severe; ‘and to have published an edict against the Dissenters of his time, in which, at the end of a vehement invective, he declared to them, that after having tolerated them, seeing his patience only served to give the contagion liberty to spread, he was resolved to strike at the root of the evil; in consequence of which, he forbade them to assemble, either in public places, or in private houses; he deprived them

of

of their temples and oratories, and gave them to the Catholic Church.'

Thank God! we live in a more enlightened and philosophic age, the rights of mankind are better understood, and amidst all the restrictions on liberty, we are allowed to live at peace, which amounts, at least, to a tacit acknowledgment, that these restrictions are unjust. If the laws, therefore, from the general forbearance of our superiors are allowed to be cruel and unworthy of execution; why keep them in being, why harass us with fears and apprehensions, and dash the already bitter cup of life with unnecessary disquietude*? 'Tis cruel, my Lord; I would sorrow for you, was you involved in the same predicament. 'For to be pursued by petty inquisitions; to be threatened with punishment and penal laws; to be marked out as dangerous and suspected; to be railed at in *high places*, with all the studied wit and art of calumny; are sufficient provocatives to ill humour. From these

* At this very time a prosecution commenced in the Consistory Court of the diocese of Gloucester, against the honest, learned, virtuous, and reverend Mr. Evanston, vicar of Tewkesbury, for a supposed deficiency in point of orthodoxy, by a few illiberal beings, who, it seems, wish to perpetuate their names upon the plan of Erostratus. 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' 'Tis a sad world we live in, where a man dare not say that his soul is his own.

considerations,

considerations, it must be concluded, that there is nothing so ridiculous in respect of policy, or so wrong and odious, with respect to common humanity, as a moderate and *half way* persecution; it only frets the sore, it raises the ill humour of mankind; excites the keener spirits; moves indignation in beholders. A resolute and *bold face* persecution leaves no time or scope for these ingendering distempers: it does the work at once, by extirpation, banishment, or massacre, and like a bold stroke in surgery, dispatches by one short amputation, what a bungling hand would make worse and worse to the perpetual sufferance of the patient?

What, my Lord, I would ask you, has created such a difference between your circumstances and mine? *You* mix with princes and rulers of the people: guarded by the laws of the land, and the additional plea of privilege: *I* associate with the poor of the earth, and travel ‘along the cool, sequestered vale of life,’ by a mere *act of grace*. Were the rights of humanity consulted? Were the laws of nature and religion attended to in this case? I beg you would not mistake me. I very freely allow, that the distinctions of society are necessary; and you may enjoy your *lawn sleeves*, and the revenues of Landaff, unenvied by me. But here lies the dispute. Are you *intitled* to a greater security from the law than myself, while we both equally act up to the requisitions

quisitions of that law ? (Your imperium in imperio is out of the question, I mean the law of common equity). Has your Lordship a greater *right* to be an *honest* man than I have ? I will suppose that you subscribed the articles as such, tho' I find a difficulty in the supposition. But if it happens to be my misfortune to be really incapable of subscribing the same articles, with a consenting conscience, does it follow that I am a villain, and therefore unworthy of the benefits of society ? Admitted, that I may be mistaken ; that the prejudices of education may prevent me from seeing the truth ; or, if you please, that I am a weak man. Some allowance is, surely, to be made on either supposition ; there is some respect due to honesty ; some reverence to be paid to conscience ; tho' the individual might be mistaken !

A down right honest man, whose mind lies uncultivated by science, and who can't, *for the life and soul* of him, persuade himself, that this globe of earth is formed either like an *egg* or a *turnip* ; but believes, as his father did before him, that it is no other than a large, misshapen trencher, is surely not deserving of the gallows : you would not hang the poor fellow, my Lord ? I have a better opinion of you. You would laugh at his simplicity ; and conclude, as every good-natured, sensible man would conclude, in such a case, that neither the philosophy of Newton, the system of the universe, nor the morals and
happiness.

happinefs of mankind were in any danger from his abfurdity.

I muft exhibit my countryman in another point of view ; and will fuppose him your tenant, and your Lordship as violent in your philosophy as in your religion ('tis only a fupposition, and there can be no great harm). Suppose the man a good husband of his land ; forms every scheme to better the foil ; carries thither the produce of his stable and his stall ; and is even at the expence of the *Baron Van Haake's* manure ; and, to complete the whole, fecures to your Lordship the *game* ! He has never meafured an angle at the æquator, nor made a voyage to the pole ; knows nothing of the theory of tides ; nor of the influence of the moon, any further than what concerns the *cutting of lambs*, and in that affair he depends upon the laft edition of *Moore's Almanack*. Suppose your Lordship required fuch a man to fubfcribe the Newtonian fyftem ; and that he had honefty enough to acknowledge, he neither underftood nor believed it, and therefore he would not *fubfcribe*.-----Would you order him to *quit* ? would you prejudice him in the neighbourhood, and permit an indolent and ignorant, but complying rascal, to enter upon his labour ?

The parable, my Lord, is exactly in point, and I am, by no means, afraid it will involve a contradiction :

dition: for while I see many of those who have subscribed the articles of the Church, pay no more respect to the *articles* in their sermons, than to *religion* in their morals, I must consider them not only as ineffectual, but as idle, absurd, and injurious. I say *many*; for the generality of the *inferior* Clergy are men of truth and virtue; men that do honour to their profession by the most enlarged and liberal principles, sanctified by a candid and benevolent life. I am happy in a numerous acquaintance among them, and will cultivate that acquaintance as long as I live. Your Lordship will excuse the digression; it was a sacrifice to truth and friendship; and I shall never scruple to step a little out of my way to perform so holy a rite.

Hitherto we have proceeded upon a supposition, that the articles might, *upon the whole*, express the doctrines of the gospel. But suppose we bring the matter nearer home, and insist upon it, that they were manufactured in a dark and designing age of the Church; that they are contradictory and absurd; at variance with the best feelings of human nature; and pernicious to the morals of individuals? your passions would be too much engaged; your prejudices would be cruelly hurt. I reverence mankind, and do not chuse to disoblige them.

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But, after all, I must confess, that I cannot see what good end the belief of three Gods can produce. As matters stand with me, I reverence the great God and Father of all; I love and wish to obey him; I feel an affection and gratitude to my Saviour, which I want words to express; and I humbly await the good Spirit of truth. What advantage to the world from the belief of original sin, imputed righteousness, and predestination absolute and unconditional? The one, in the opinion of some of the greatest men in the Church, generates a slavish and inactive dependence; the other, a conscious meanness, unworthy of a man and a Christian; and the last, an indifference in religion, mixt with a bigotted, illiberal, and damning principle, from which, in the words of the Liturgy, ‘ Good Lord deliver us.’

If we descend from religion to politics, we shall find that something, in conscience and gratitude, is due to the Dissenters. In the various convulsions of the state, and revolutions of government, *they* stood the firm friends of liberty, and the support of episcopacy; even to the sacrifice of their own privileges. You well know who were the chief promoters of the TEST ACT, upon a solemn, national promise of a repeal, in favour of protestant non-conformists; and when the terror subsided, and a bill for the purpose was to have been brought into the House,

House, by whom it was *lost*: it slipped through the greasy fingers of a Bishop; bred, by the by, a Presbyterian, but who lost his morality with his religion; which makes me observe, in spite of candor, that there is something in the character unfavourable to human liberty: how it is your Lordship can best determine.

But, perhaps, you would chuse to bring me back to the unhappy times of the first Charles. With all my heart. Even then you'll find the Presbyterians the staunch friends of rational freedom, and, at the same time, the *only** people who had honour, humanity, and courage enough, to step forward; boldly remonstrate against the proceedings of the times, and petition for the life of the *royal sufferer*: tho' the bishops have since thought fit, to appropriate all honour and loyalty to themselves, and the exclusive right of damning their adversaries, and of deprecating the divine wrath, once a year: but the truth is, that when night, with all its horrors, came upon them, they meanly skulked from danger: but when the dawn sprung up, who but they! the only friends of government and royalty; the only men entitled to the advantages of society;---all others were proscribed as enemies, the pests of society, and not fit to live. But history will inform

* Vid. Lord Clarendon.

you, that ‘ a * Presbyterian parliament restored the second Charles to the throne of his ancestors, and during their short continuance, gave him effectual marks of their zeal for his service, and the establishment of peace and tranquility throughout the kingdom. And the restoration of the king produced that of the Church of England, which found itself, all at once, in almost the same condition she had been in the year 1640§.’ And yet the Lords of this Church will not allow their benefactors even the common benefits of society !

At this distance of time, perhaps, it is no wonder if the kindness be forgotten : but one would naturally expect that every sentiment of gratitude would have operated in favour of the *restorers* ; no such thing,---for immediately upon the dissolution of this parliament, ‘ The Church, or rather the Bishops, had the good fortune to have another, consisting of their most zealous friends, and disposed to sacrifice to the king a little of the nation’s money, provided he would, in his turn, make them a sacrifice of the Presbyterians†.’ ’Tis the way with some folks, my

* Bishop Burnet says, these five following persons, all Presbyterians, had the chief hand in the *Restoration*, viz. Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury ; Sir Arthur Annesly, afterwards Earl of Anglesey ; Denzil Hollis, created Lord Hollis, of Ifield ; the Earl of Manchester ; and the Lord Roberts.

§ Rapin.

† Ibid.

Lord,

Lord, to liquidate their debts, by hanging their creditors. In the succeeding reign, when James, with many reverend Bishops* in his train, was travelling fast towards Rome, the *Protestant Bishops* altered their measures; laid by their malignity; cajoled the Dissenters; and begged them to come in, as auxiliaries, to the support of the common cause: 'writings were published from time to time, in which the writers, as members of the Church of England, acknowledged their error in driving the Presbyterians to extremities; confessed they were not enough on their guard against the artifices of the court, and *promised* a very different behaviour on the happy re-establishment of affairs.' It is true, says the historian, 'an accusation lies against them, of having been no less forgetful of this promise, than of that made when the restoration of Charles the second was transacting.'

I should be sorry to write the history of prelacy and prelates; they are men; human nature would suffer; for a miserable detail of vices, the meanest and most unmanly, would present themselves! I

* The following Bishops had capitulated with James the II^d. and were ready to sign a *carte blanche* in favour of the Church of Rome, viz. Crew, Bishop of Durham; Wood, of Litchfield; Barlow of Lincoln; Cartwright, of Chester; Parker, of Oxford; and Watson, of St. David's,

§ Rapin,

will

will not condemn them in a lump ; many a great and good character has appeared upon your bench ; they are soon observed ; for, like comets, they appear but seldom, and for that reason engage the general attention. How easy for a bishop to secure the love of *his* contemporaries, and the respect of all posterity ! 'Tis only to be just and generous, mild, courteous, and humane ; active for the liberty of his fellow subjects, and attentive to the cause of the widow and fatherless ! These, you will say, are virtues ; but they are upon a level with humanity ; and were they attended with difficulties to such people as myself, yet we may reasonably suppose, that he who can communicate the spirit to others, has, at least, a double portion for his own use ; which will render the attainment very easy.

I am now tête-à-tête with your Lordship ; but I cannot forget Dr. Law, Prebend of Durham, Archdeacon of Stafford, Master of Peter-House, Cambridge, and Bishop of Carlisle. One might naturally have expected that he, who has been so intimate with Dissenters, and who peoples America with half converted missionaries from that sect ; who has frequently corresponded with dissenting parsons, and even published a letter from the late Dr. Taylor, of Warrington, as an *imprimatur* to his treatise on the *insensible controversy*, would have stood up and spoke one word in behalf of his old friends !

But

But no such favours, it seems, must be expected from bishops; no friendship beyond a *dear Sir*; no kindness beyond a smile; nor any toleration this side of *subscription*. And since this is the case, I should be glad to know which of the articles lays down the doctrine of the sleep of the soul, and which of them does not militate against it? and yet he holds the articles in one hand, and points to poverty and a prison with the other. I know not how he voted, whether *for* or *against* the petition: this I know, I despise a half friend, more than I do a feeble enemy. I could wish such people sat down, drank their glass, and smoked their pipe in quiet, and not plague the world with their dreams; nor unhinge the faith of good Christians with their crude reasonings upon subjects that had better be let alone.

In his *Considerations on the state of the world, &c.* he says, that religion and morality are in a state progressive towards perfection; where, in the name of all that is venerable and true! in England? no, we are in Shimei's case. There is a line of circumvallation drawn; the brook Kidron surrounds us, beyond which, it is death to proceed!

It might, perhaps, be considered as invidious if I were to make an observation, which, however, always appeared to me very just; and mayhap,
your

your Lordship, after a little self-converse, might honestly subscribe to it. That those, who have had the misfortune to be bred up under the influence of a *system*, whether for the regulation of their political or religious opinions, have always considered themselves as confined within a hallowed circle, which it was the greatest rebellion or the utmost impiety to break through. This is the consecrated horizon which circumscribes their views and confines their ideas; all beyond, is a land of darkness and hobgoblins, heretics and devils! I speak, in some measure, from experience: I have felt myself (and I own it) a slave to a system; but whether it be the effect of grace or something else, I have flown off at a tangent, and now explore those forbidden regions, with only the gospel, common sense, and the love of truth, for my guides.

Oxford is called, even by one of your own corps[†], ‘the atmosphere of wholesome severities;’ and it has been observed by others, that few come from thence but are unhappily cramped by a narrow and illiberal education; dazzled with the solemnity and pomp, inseparable from a well endowed college, they cannot easily submit to the unadorned simplicity of truth, nor exert their faculties beyond the awful limits prescribed them: ’tis unfortunate; but as they mix with the world, they will drop their shackles

† Bishop of Gloucester.

and shew themselves the free denizens of truth. I will do justice to the Oxonians; for, Dissenter as I am, I am honoured with the acquaintance of many of them: they feel and own the impositions of the times, and wish the human soul was left at liberty to indulge a proper exertion. The *Essay upon Human Understanding* is no longer proscribed by the heads of houses, and a freedom of enquiry is, at least, tolerated. In consequence, they have found out that Dissenters are *men*, and deserve to be treated as such; that they are good and useful subjects, and ought to be acknowledged as such; that there are philosophers and scholars among them, who will submit to no opinions but what bear the sanction of truth and reason. This looks well: the first step towards thinking for one's self, is to allow a freedom of thought to others; the next is to indulge in the same privilege. They have done so; and many of their names do honour to the venerable list of *petitioning Clergy*. I wish them success, upon the same principle that I wish success to our own petition. I will not attempt to keep their case at a distance*; the interests of truth, virtue, and humanity, are the same; and I would not wish to succeed by

* Vid. *Essay on public worship, &c.* in which the ingenious author has paid more attention to policy than good nature. He advises the Dissenters to 'keep their case at a distance from that of the Clergy; because it would render them less disagreeable to the Bishops.'

dishonorable methods: let what will be the consequence, I am determined never to sacrifice upon the altars of meanness.

Every man is my brother; I will own him as such in every circumstance in life. Whether he wears *lawn sleeves*, *pudding sleeves*, or no sleeves at all; whether he worships by a form, dictated by a *Cranmer*; or petitions heaven in the sentiments of *Calvin*, or *Arminius*, with me, makes no difference. Is he willing to permit every individual to judge for himself, and worship his God as an *honest man*? is all the enquiry I would chuse to make; and if I am answered in the affirmative, I am happy, and there is an end of the business. I consider him as ‘a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.’ For I regard it as a fact, that where there are moderation and candor, there you will find a love of truth, kindness, humility, and all those fair plants of virtue, the genuine offspring of a good heart, cultivated by that spirit which is from above. On the contrary, a vicious man can have no charity for any opinions but what coincide with his interest, or give their sanction to his propensities. Upon these principles, my Lord, you will find infidels, whose debaucheries scandalize human nature, very hearty sticklers for orthodoxy, and violent enemies to a reformation. I have no need to mention a
Bolingbroke,

Bolingbroke, a Prince Eugene*, or the Court of Leo^s. &c. you may find examples enow on this side the great gulph. On these principles you will find a King of Prussia a very hearty Protestant, and Voltaire an abject Papist; the Dutchman a disciple of Confucius, and our honest Nabobs bearing their offerings to the temple of the Sun. But enough, my Lord; I sicken at the prospect. Religion is become a mere beldame, polluted by every villain! closeted in the Treasury, and prostituted in the open streets! At St. James's, she is cloathed in pomp, dignity, and indifference; in your Lordship's diocese, she appears the most squalid harlot under heaven! violent in her motions, indecent in her gesticulations, and mean and pitiful in all her expressions. What think you of a reform? Suppose you were to make a tour of as much of South Wales as falls under your department. It would, at least, indulge your pride; if Bishops, mortified as they are to this world, had any; the people would flock around you, as they did about Paul and Barnabas of old;

* Prince Eugene, prime minister of the empire, abetted the persecutions against the Protestants of Hungary:—He was bred in France a Papist, and designed for the Church. Disappointments drove him to the service of the Emperor.—His merit, as a soldier, raised him to the first offices in the state; but his moral character was that of a profligate debauchee, and profest atheist.

§ The court of Pope Leo the Xth. consisted almost entirely of atheists; and, consequently, violent enemies to a reformation.

they will consider you, if not as a *God*, at least as *divine*. I would chuse to accompany you; and as I have no vehicle of my own, I will even make no ceremony, and step into your's; and, without breaking through the unites, we shall be soon at Landaff; for the chariot-wheels of a Bishop tarry no longer in their revolutions than those of the arch-priest Jehu. Drive on, and 'let us see your zeal for the Lord God of Hosts!'

But you say, you have many reasons against such a journey---you don't like the company: and if they *subscribe* the *articles*, it is enough. Blessings upon the head of so tolerant and temperate a man! And since so many reasons concur to keep you within the precincts of St. James's; for where the carcase is, there the eagles will flock, I will try my abilities as a painter;---my talents as a poet, I shall reserve for another occasion; when your Lordship may depend upon being made the hero of the epic muse!

Behold that gothic pile,
 -----which to th' astonish'd gaze,
 Uprears its gloomy front,---dark as the fiend,
 Who in the twilight grove, his monkish brood,
 Taught to absorb the heav'n descended ray
 Of reason!-----O'er the high-born soul
 To spread the veil of superstitious fear,
 And damp the flame, celestial, as it rose.

Let us walk in, my Lord;---all is pleasure and quiet-
 ness;---

ness ;---for they are asleep. Behold that holy man (for he has subscribed) ; he is reading the daily service of the Church ;---'tis an old tale, unanimated and cold : they have heard it over and over, and are gone to rest !---their spirits will be refreshed, and new vigour will circulate through their veins. The service is over---they will be soon all alive ;---hark ! the seats crack ;---the holy building is in an uproar ! retreat, my Lord, for the Philistines are upon you ! The temple cannot contain them ; they swarm in the yard ;---the good man is aloft. Observe the violence of the preacher ;---see the convulsions of the hearers ! the *catch-word* is given---GLORY, GLORY, GLORY, &c. See the contortions of their bodies,---the foam of the priest ;---*howling, crying, singing, laughing, jumping, fainting* on every side ! Look well to that itinerant Christian ; she is a young lady from C---d---nshire ;---the vestal feels the God :---her hand-maid smooths down the robes of chastity, but her uncovered bosom swells to the eye of desire !---'tis too much ;---nature will soon be exhausted by the violence of her motions ; ---she faints ;---and heaven has stamped his image upon her breast* !

Will

* The author begs leave to observe, that the above is only a *faint* copy of an original, exhibited to public view every day within the diocese of Landaff. He had drawn the *contour* with a greater exactness, and finished the whole piece with such a

strict

Will you have any more, my Lord; or are you satisfied with this small but edifying sketch? Suppose we now changed the scene: 'by variety we shall prevent satiety;' 'tis an old scrip that I have often copied at school. Behold that unadorned structure;---' the builder, you say, consulted none of the five orders---there is no vestige of taste throughout the whole:---you are right, my Lord; the builder knows no more of the *orders*, than your Lordship does of ancient *Runic*, or modern *Welsh*: if he has consulted the *useful*, 'tis enough: let us walk in, 'tis a Presbyterian meeting-house: God forbid! why? there is no such prohibition in all the Bible, my Lord. We will stand at the door then;---observe the people;---they seem attentive, serious, and devout. Let us hear what the preacher has to say.---We may judge from a part of the whole. Hear him!-----

" Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I
" have commanded you." ' This is the last injunction

strict regard to *truth*, that he apprehended the world in general would not have found fault with;---but a worthy divine, upon viewing it, with some attention, declared, the drapery flowed with a pure attic elegance; the limbs were finely turned; and the muscles swelled with a peculiar strength;---then drawing the fore finger of his right hand across the canvass, and muttering the word *prudence*, the life and soul of the picture vanished at once; and nothing remained for the inspection of the connoisseur, but a lean and cold skeleton,---with this motto,

' *Multa fero, ut placem genus irritabile vatum!* '

" of

“ of our divine master giving his sanction to those vir-
 “ tues, which he recommended in his sermon on the
 “ mount, and exemplified in his own amiable and
 “ heavenly life. What shall we say then of those
 “ who reduce Christianity into a mere speculative
 “ object of faith? were faith alone sufficient to com-
 “ plete the Christian character, the road to salva-
 “ tion would not be strait and difficult; but it
 “ would become a broad, easy, and beaten track.
 “ ---In that case, millions, who have sacrificed
 “ every principle of humanity;---who have per-
 “ verted the course of justice; betrayed the father-
 “ less and widow; or carried ruin and desolation
 “ through the peaceful vales of industry; would
 “ tread the streets of the new Jerusalem; and carry
 “ with them every sentiment of folly, injustice, and
 “ wanton cruelty.

“ Religion, then, does not consist, so much,
 “ in the rectitude of our opinions, as in the regu-
 “ larity of our lives; not so much in the enlarge-
 “ ment of our understandings, as in the purity of
 “ our hearts: But, at the same time, while it re-
 “ quires a vigorous exertion of every power of
 “ moral agency in the cause of virtue, we are by
 “ no means to conclude, that the understanding is
 “ to be left an uncultivated waste. The human soul
 “ is anxious for improvement. Indulge her
 “ native thirst for knowledge; explore the
 “ wide

“ wide extended fields of nature ; contemplate
 “ the works of providence and grace ; but let
 “ truth and reason be your guides. Let the
 “ candle of the Lord direct your researches ;
 “ otherwise ye are in danger of being led aside
 “ into the gloom of superstition ; betrayed
 “ into the paths of folly by the glare of enthusi-
 “ asm ; or lost, beyond redemption, on the rocks of
 “ sophistry and false learning. To conclude : as
 “ the peculiar characteristic of the gospel is *charity*,
 “ cultivate a candid and generous disposition, a
 “ tender and forbearing regard for your fellow
 “ creatures ; never consider yourselves as the
 “ standards of holiness, or purity of sentiment ; give
 “ the right hand of fellowship to every worthy man
 “ of every persuasion.-----“ Stand off : come not
 “ near me ; for I am holier than thou,” is a speech
 “ unworthy of a Christian ; it is the natural produce
 “ of a bad heart ; it is the last resource of a miser-
 “ able soul, which, fleeing the cheerful haunts of
 “ men, hopes, in a distant and criminal solitude,
 “ to engage the reverence of the world. Be it *our*
 “ endeavour to be *useful*, and engage the *love* of
 “ mankind ; and let their *reverence* be parcelled out
 “ among the saints of the desert ; 'tis not worth the
 “ pursuit of a good man, for it never shook hands
 “ with friendship !

“ Ye

“ Ye dissent : the liberty you take yourselves,
 “ allow to others : ye feel your own imperfections ;
 “ look with candor on the failings of your neigh-
 “ bours : such a conduct will give you that mild
 “ and elegant simplicity, which pride, power, and
 “ an unsocial religion, can never attain. The
 “ world may frown upon us ; pride may despise us ;
 “ or the sordid spirit may pity us : but we shall se-
 “ cure the favour of our God ; and truth and vir-
 “ tue will give us a dignity which the world can nei-
 “ ther give nor take away.”

After such a contrast, will your Lordship refuse
 so modest a request as that of the Dissenters ! A
 liberty to worship God in a mild and moderate way ;
 to carry their petitions to heaven, not as the slaves
 of a party, but as Christians, who deduce their sen-
 timents from the gospel, and from no other source.
 A liberty to perform the sacred offices of religious
 worship, unbiaſſed by the terrors of confiscations or
 a dungeon ! or in other words, the liberty of acting
 like men, with all the dignity connected with the
 character.

Give us then that liberty to whichever honest man,
 every peaceable and virtuous citizen is entitled ; and
 whatever we may think of the *rights* of humanity,
 we will be grateful. We will cultivate every vir-
 tue and every science that may contribute to render

H

the

the name of Briton venerable ; and swell the sails of commerce, and fix the standards of honour on the most distant shores.

But if the name of Englishman, which, to others, is synonymous with freedom, must, to us, mean no more than a wretched, uncertain, and pitiful indulgence, adieu, ye white cliffs of Albion ! ye fertile vales, where erst with innocence and young simplicity, I led along the festive dance, adieu ! Ye fair swelling downs, which, on the bosom of the wide spreading ocean, I have oft beheld, and, in extasy, cried out, *dulce natale solum !* adieu ! Ye sacred repositories of the dust of my venerable ancestors, adieu !

But, I shall not go alone : the friends of virtue, religion, and human nature will attend me ; and sweeten my voyage to those western regions, whither every thing great and good seems to be sojourning :

‘ For I would rather be a Lybian,
Than to repute myself a son of Britain
Under such hard conditions as these times
Lay on us.’

‘ Let us then withdraw into some retired corner, and cultivate some deserted spot in the manner we best approve. As the love of our country, and our wishes for its welfare cannot be gratified---let us extend our views to other countries*.’

* Essays on Public Worship, &c.

‘ Eamus

‘ Eamus omnes,—————

Aut pars indocili melior grege :—

Nos manet oceanus circumvagus : arva, beata

Petamus arva, divites et insulas :

Piis secunda, vate me, datur fuga.’—*Horat.*

We will go, my Lord, and realize that elegant and benevolent picture drawn by *Stern*: ‘ even in these deserts, we shall find out wherewith to call forth our affections ;---if we can do no better, we will fasten them upon some sweet myrtle ; or seek some melancholy cypress to connect ourselves to.’ But we *shall* do better ; ‘ We will make her wilderness like Eden, and her deserts like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein ; thanksgiving and the voice of melody. For we may then build houses and inhabit them ; plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them in peace.’---We will teach our children, ‘ what deliverance the Lord hath wrought for us ;’ and erect a monument to truth and liberty, while we point to Britain as to an inhospitable shore !

In the mean time I beg leave to subscribe myself,

My Lord !

Your Lordship’s humble servant,

The A U T H O R.

E R R A T A.

Page 12, l. 8, for clime r. *climb*.

21, l. 17, for emolument r. *cmoluments*.

29, first l. note, after prosecution r. *is*.

38, l. 18, for prebend r. *prebendary*.

40, l. 10, after darknes dele and, and r. *haunted by*.

44, l. 5, for unites r. *unities*.

44, last l. for pleasure r. *peace*.

51, l. 7, for Stern r. *Sterne*.

